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STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

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Smaller Acreage Indicated for 1949

Acreage of spring-planted crops, as indicated March 1, appears to be the smallest since the pre-war 1937-39 period. The decline in the total of 17 crops, including hay - is from 275 million acres in 1948 to 270.2 million acres now in prospect. This is nearly offset, however, by the much larger acreage of winter wheat sown last fall, of which more than usual remains for harvest.

The 1949 acreage of 52 principal crops may total nearly 361 million acres, 1.6 million acres less than in 1948. Total prospective acreages are about 1 percent above the aggregate of allotments or suggested goals.

1949 Prospective Acreages Compared with 1948

1949 indicated acreage of:

Corn, all	DOWN	2 percent
All spring wheat ¹	UP	4 percent
Oats	SAME	
Barley	DOWN	11 percent
Flaxseed	DOWN	4 percent
Rice	SAME	
Sorghums, all purposes	DOWN	12 percent
Potatoes	DOWN	7 percent
Sweetpotatoes	DOWN	6 percent
Tobacco ²	UP	4 percent
Beans, dry edible	DOWN	7 percent
Peas, dry field	UP	32 percent
Soybeans ³	DOWN	4 percent
Cowpeas ³	DOWN	9 percent
Peanuts ³	DOWN	18 percent
Hay ²	SAME	
Sugar beets	DOWN	4 percent

¹Winter wheat already planted exceeds previous year by 5½ percent.

²Acreage harvested. ³Grown alone for all purposes.

Feed Grain Acres Down 3 Percent

Acreage in feed grains may be 4½ million acres less than in 1948. Only oats are near the 1948 acreage. Corn acreage will be the smallest in more than 50 years. Sorghum acreage will be one-eighth less than in 1948. For both, plantings are somewhat limited by the huge winter wheat acreage. Barley acreage is down 11 percent. Hay acreage will be about the same as in 1948 and the average.

Food Grain Acreage at Record High

Food grains will be grown on a larger acreage than ever before. Winter wheat acreage was a record, and spring wheat acreage is up nearly 4 percent over last year. Rice acreage is about the same as last year's record high, but rye acreage is down.

Weather

Severe weather in the second week of March delayed spring work in much of the country, with significant delay in parts of the South. In most areas, progress of spring is about normal to advanced. Except in North Dakota and Mountain areas, snow has mostly disappeared, and the melting was so gradual that run-off was limited, as soils absorbed the moisture. Irrigation water supplies are improved in all States and are above average in most districts.

Labor and Farm Supplies

Supply of farm labor seems adequate, but because of high wages and the lower prices in prospect some farmers plan to curtail crops needing heavy hired labor and shift to those on which they can do most of the work themselves. Farm machinery appears equal to demand. Seed supplies are ample, although some oats show poor germination and short supplies of alfalfa seed have limited new seedings in some sections. Although more fertilizer is available than ever before, the supply of nitrogen in some areas is below demand. The relatively large acreage of oats is thought to be due in part to the use of oats as a nurse crop for new seedings of alfalfa, clover, and lespedeza, looking forward to more land in meadows and pastures and better soil-conserving practices.

Potatoes

The smallest acreage of potatoes in almost 70 years is indicated for 1949. The 1,980,000 acres is 7 percent smaller than in 1948, and 29 percent smaller than the 1938-47 average. It is 2 percent larger than the acreage goal, however. If yields in each State should equal the 1946-48 average, production from the 1949 indicated acreage will amount to 382 million bushels, compared with the 1948 production of 445,850,000 bushels. Should yields in 1949 equal the very high yields of 1948, when growing and harvesting conditions were very favorable, production might exceed 400 million bushels.

Milk and Eggs

Egg production was at a record rate for February. Despite 3 percent fewer layers, February egg production was 2 percent larger than in February 1948, and one-sixth above average. Culling of farm flocks in February was lighter than a year ago, but heavier than average for the month. Price relationships were more favorable to poultrymen than in any February since 1945.

Milk production was also at a record rate per cow for February. Although there were fewer milk cows than at any time since January 1931, total production was larger than last February and 3 percent above average for the month. Wholesale prices received by farmers averaged \$4.33 per 100 pounds in February, 19 cents less than in January, and 68 cents less than a year ago.

Citrus Fruit

Estimates of citrus production on March 1 were only slightly lower than a month earlier. Orange estimates for 1948-49 is 99.4 million boxes, down 10 percent from last season but 11 percent above average. Grapefruit may total 46 million boxes, 25 percent less than last year and 3 percent less than average.

Truck Crops Make Fair Progress

Commercial vegetable crops in most areas made fair progress during the first half of March, even though some areas received delaying rains, and temperatures reached the danger borderline in areas as far south as northern Florida.

As of March 1, total acreage of 1949 winter vegetable crops is estimated at 299,300 acres, 1 percent above 1948 acreage and 12 percent above average. Estimated production is 1,343,100 tons compared with 1,506,800 tons produced last winter. Indicated 1949 acreage of spring truck crops for which estimates have been made is about

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	Jan. 15 1949	Feb. 15 1949	Feb. 15 1949
Wheat, bu.	dol. 2.02	1.94	2.17
Corn, bu.	dol. 1.25	1.12	1.57
Peanuts, lb.	ct. 10.5	10.3	11.8
Cotton, lb.	ct. 29.27	29.14	30.38
Potatoes, bu.	dol. 1.66	1.72	1.80
Hogs, 100 lb.	dol. 20.10	19.60	17.80
Beef cattle, 100 lb.	dol. 20.00	18.70	13.30
Veal calves, 100 lb.	dol. 25.10	24.30	16.50
Lams, 100 lb.	dol. 21.90	21.50	14.40
Butterfat, lb.	ct. 163.2	162.5	64.4
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb.	dol. 1 4.27	1 4.22	3.92
Chickens, live, lb.	ct. 30.7	29.5	27.9
Eggs, doz.	ct. 145.3	145.9	52.7

¹ Adjusted for seasonal variation.

1 percent larger than last spring and 5 percent above average. The largest increase is in onions, up 21 percent, with carrots showing a 14 percent increase. Greatest reduction is in tomatoes, with 25 percent less acreage than last year.

Big Increase in Chicks Hatched

Commercial chicks hatched in February was a record for the month. Total of 144.2 million was up from a year ago by 47 percent, and from 1943-47 average by 17 percent. Large hatch also expected for March--number of eggs in incubators March 1 was 27 percent larger than a year earlier. 50 percent more chicks hatched first 2 months this year than in same period last year. (BAE's mid-month "Hatchery Production" report gives hatchings by States and average prices received for chicks.)

Potato Stocks 9 Percent Larger Than Year Ago

Some progress was made during February in reducing the excess supply of merchantable Irish potatoes. Combined grower and dealer stocks of 71.1 million bushels on hand March 1 are up 9 percent from March 1 year ago but are down 5 percent from March 1 two years ago. Stocks year ago were 65 million; two years ago, 75.2 million bushels. (Details by States and potato-producing groups of States will be found in BAE's special report of March 15.)

Milk Prices Continue A Little Lower

Fluid milk prices at retail and producer levels continued to decline. Standard milk delivered to homes in 25 major cities early in March averaged 20.6 cents a quart. This was nearly half a cent a quart lower than in February and about same as in March last year.

Prices "Received" and "Paid" Decline

Prices received by farmers dropped 4 percent from mid-January to mid-February while prices paid for things they have to buy, including interest and taxes, dropped only 1 percent. Index of prices received February 15 was 258, down 49 index points from the record high reached January a year ago. Prices paid index was at 245 mid-February, down only 6 index points from record high of 251 in January, June, July and August last year.

March Cash Receipts Up From Year Ago

Farmers are expected to receive about 2 billion dollars from sale of their products in March--about same as in February, but up 8 percent from March of last year. Marketings of both crops and livestock are larger than a year ago, and increases are only partly offset by lower average prices. Receipts first 3 months of 1949 will probably reach 6.6 billion dollars, about 5 percent more than in first quarter of 1948. Estimates preliminary.

Farm Employment Up Seasonally, But Is Less Than Year Ago

Farm employment during the week of February 20-26 began its usual rise as farmers started work for a new crop season. In many areas actual field work was not yet possible, but fences, ditches, and machinery were being readied for spring planting. Farm employment totaled 8,370,000 persons, 3 percent less than a year earlier. The number of farm operators and unpaid family workers increased 10 percent from a month earlier while the number of hired workers was a third larger.

Smaller Early Spring Lamb Crop

The 1949 early spring lamb crop in the principal producing States is estimated to be 6 percent less than last year and smaller than in any year of record starting with 1924. The small lamb crop this year continues to reflect the decrease in breeding ewes. Early lambs have made somewhat better progress than expected, considering the adverse weather in the western part of the United States. Marketings of lambs before July 1 are expected to be down, about in line with the smaller early crop.

Wool Production Down; Cash Receipts Up

Total wool production in 1948 is estimated at 280.5 million pounds, 9 percent less than in 1947, and the smallest since 1923. Cash receipts from shorn wool production at \$114 million were about \$8 million larger than in 1947, but about \$7 million less than the 10-year average.

Livestock Marketing Expenses

Expenses of marketing all livestock, including transportation, were 72 cents per 100 pounds of livestock in 1947, compared with 57 cents in 1939, and 53 cents in 1932. In 1947, the average marketing expense per 100 pounds was equal to 3.5 percent of the average price received by farmers for livestock, compared with 8.3 percent in 1939, and 13.5 percent in 1932. (See "The Expenses of Marketing Livestock, 1947 Compared with 1932

and 1939" in the March 1949 Marketing and Transportation Situation.)

Livestock and Meat Statistics

The February 1949 *Livestock and Meat Situation* contains a statistical appendix of 32 tables of selected statistical series on livestock numbers, production and consumption of meat, several series of price data, and miscellaneous series.

Poultry and Egg Statistics

58 tables of historical data relating to the poultry industry of the United States are presented in the *Poultry and Egg Situation* for February 1949. Sources for comparable current data, when available, are indicated on each table.

Marketing Margins for Tomatoes

Tomato producers in South Carolina, marketing their crop in the New York area, received 31.3 cents of the consumer's dollar spent for these tomatoes in June 1948. Marketing charges accounted for the other 68.7 cents of the tomato dollar.

These figures are presented in a report "Marketing South Carolina Tomatoes in New York City," made jointly by the South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. The study was made with Research and Marketing Act funds.

Tomato growers in the State, it is shown, received an average of \$1.68 per 30-pound lug of green-wrapped tomatoes, and marketing charges added another \$3.71 to this amount by the time the crop reached consumers. The average retail price for tomatoes in New York City, going to market through the channels studied was \$5.39 per lug. The \$1.68 per 30-pound lug, which was received by farmers, was paid to them for tomatoes picked and delivered to the packing shed.

Tractors Increase Fast In Southeast, But Corn Belt Still Leads

Farm tractors have increased most rapidly in the Southeast where in 1945 less than 9 percent of the farms had tractors. That year the Southeast had 245,000 tractors; there were 300,000 in January 1947 and 379,000 in May 1948. In the country as a whole, tractors in use May 1, 1948 had reached 3,250,000; the January 1, 1948 number was 3,150,000. The 5 Corn Belt States had about 27 percent of the tractors, and Iowa had more than any other State.

Not only were tractor numbers up in 1948 but this is true of many other important labor-saving machines like combines, corn pickers, mowers, moldboard plows, side delivery rakes, and milking machines. (See "Farm Machinery," released by BAE March 15.)

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE		
INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	FEB. 1949
Prices received by farmers . .	1910-14=100	258
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes	1910-14=100	245
Parity ratio	1910-14=100	105
Wholesale prices of food . . .	1910-14=100	247
Retail prices of food	1910-14=100	264
Farm wage rates	1910-14=100	423
Weekly factory earnings . . .	1910-14=100	494
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	JAN.-FEB. 1948	JAN.-FEB. 1949
Milk, (Bil. lb.)	16.4	16.9
Eggs, (Bil.)	9.0	9.4
Beef, (Dr. Wt., Mil. lb.)* . .	1,637	1,596
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. Wt., Mil. lb.)*	60	56
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.)* . . .	1,003	1,053
All meats (Dr. Wt., Mil. lb.)*.	1,762	1,757

*Federally inspected only.

¹January figure.

²December figure. Factory payroll per employed worker.